

NORTH UNION STREET CORRIDOR

A COMMUNITY VISION PLAN



Produced by the

ROCHESTER REGIONAL
COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER

July 2008

NORTH UNION STREET CORRIDOR

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Rochester, New York



Source: RRCDC

Produced by the

Rochester Regional Community Design Center

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC) thankfully acknowledges the important contributions of people and organizations who were involved with planning the mini-charrette, the mini-charrette event and the post-charrette process. We also extend thanks to those who contributed funding to the charrette event and those individuals and organizations who financially support RRCDC, helping to make the Marketview Heights Mini-Charrette and other charrettes possible.

Thank you to the Marketview Heights Steering Committee; the mini-charrette facilitators for

volunteering their time and professional skills; City Blue Imaging Services for their contributed services; the RRCDC volunteers, interns and staff; and the many others who have been generously involved in this process.

A special thank you to the Rochester Area Community Foundation, City of Rochester, and Housing Opportunities, Inc., for contributing funds to help make the Marketview Heights Mini-Charrette possible. The Rochester City School District and the Dr. Freddie Thomas Learning Center also deserve thanks for hosting the mini-charrette event.



Marketview Heights neighborhood residents, members of local community organizations, and design professionals hard at work during the North Union Street Corridor Mini-Charrette. *Source: RRCDC*

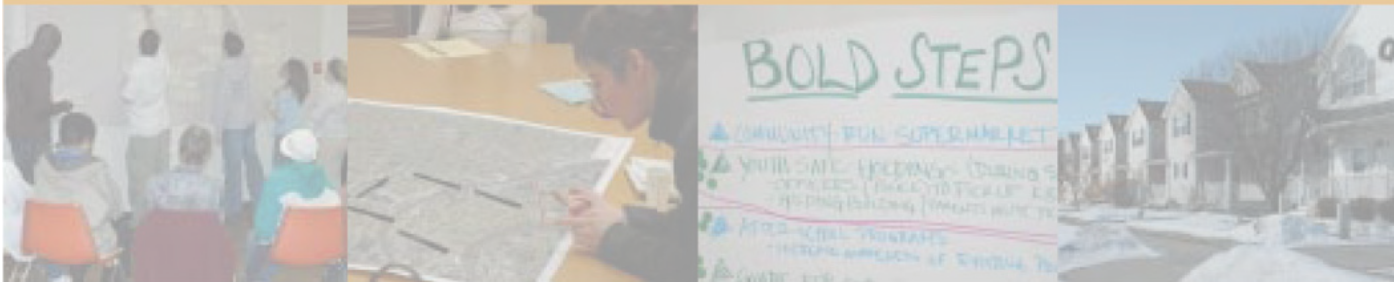
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ii
How We Got Here	2
Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
North Union Street History	5
North Union Street Today	8
Mini-Charrette Coordination and Planning	10
The Mini-Charrette Event	11
Mini-Charrette Base Map	12
Mini-Charrette Focus Areas	13
Mini-Charrette Results	14
Community-Based Guiding Principles for Development	15
Focus Area A	16
Focus Area B	19
Focus Area C	20
Focus Area D	23
Focus Area E	24
Corridor Vision Development	27
Corridor Vision Overview	28
Plan A—East Main Street Node	33
Plan B—Kenilworth/Weld Node	37
Plan C—Public Market Node	41
Plan D—Central Park Node	45
Next Steps	49
Summary and Conclusions	51
Steering Committee Members and Charrette Facilitators	52
Bibliography	53
About RRCDC	54

Yellow = HOP
Pink = CITY
Orange = RHA

HOW WE GOT HERE

In March 2005, representatives from Housing Opportunities, Inc., Marketview Heights Association, Enterprise Community Partners, and the City of Rochester came together to discuss ideas for attracting investment to the Marketview Heights neighborhood. All agreed this would be a long-term effort that would need to be led and sustained by community stakeholders.



MARKETVIEW HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

Over the next two years, more than 150 neighborhood residents, business owners, churches and other institutions came together in numerous venues to define their “vision” for the neighborhood. Their time, energy, ideas, and talents resulted in a neighborhood revitalization strategy... a blueprint for long-term change to attract investment. One of the key strategies was to conduct a community charrette to identify and begin improvements in the physical landscape.

making change happen

This planning process has been, and continues to be, funded by the Rochester Community Development Collaborative, which includes the Daisy Marquis Jones Foundation, United Way of Greater Rochester, HSBC, JP Morgan Chase, Bank of America, the Bruner Foundation, City of Rochester, and Enterprise Community Partners. Additional funding and support are provided by the City of Rochester, Enterprise Community Partners, the Rochester Area Community Foundation, and Housing Opportunities, Inc.

prepared for and with the
Marketview Heights Collective Action Project
February 2006

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The cover of the *Marketview Heights Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy: Making Change Happen* document, the blueprint for attracting long-term change and investment. Source: ROI

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In collaboration with the Marketview Heights Steering Committee, comprised of residents from the Marketview Heights neighborhood, Rural Opportunities, Inc., and Housing Opportunities, Inc., the Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC) prepared this community-based vision plan for the North Union Street corridor from East Main Street to Central Park. The document serves to provide a written and visual urban design vision reflecting the goals and ideas of community members for revitalization of their neighborhood and the corridor.

This report incorporates ideas suggested by nearly 40 residents and stakeholders at the Marketview Heights Mini-Charrette held at the Dr. Freddie Thomas Learning Center in October 2007. The document expresses these ideas as elements of good design and planning to create a healthy, viable community and as inspiration for the corridor's future development. The mini-charrette was proposed as the first phase of implementing the Marketview Heights Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy which was completed in February 2006. The formal planning process for the mini-charrette

event began in April 2007 and involved a steering committee comprised of diverse neighborhood stakeholders from the Marketview Heights Collective Action Project. Following the mini-charrette, the process of creating a vision for the North Union Street Corridor was carried out during late 2007 and early 2008.

The North Union Street Corridor Vision contains maps which include design and development recommendations for four nodes in the corridor between East Main Street and Central Park. General design concepts expressed as important by community members at the mini-charrette are reflected in these maps. These include:

- Develop short-term, immediately achievable projects
- Improve pedestrian realm experience
- Create a unifying identity for the corridor
- Capitalize upon vacant lots

These concepts were instrumental in developing the vision and will serve as a guide for the community as they work to create positive change throughout the corridor.



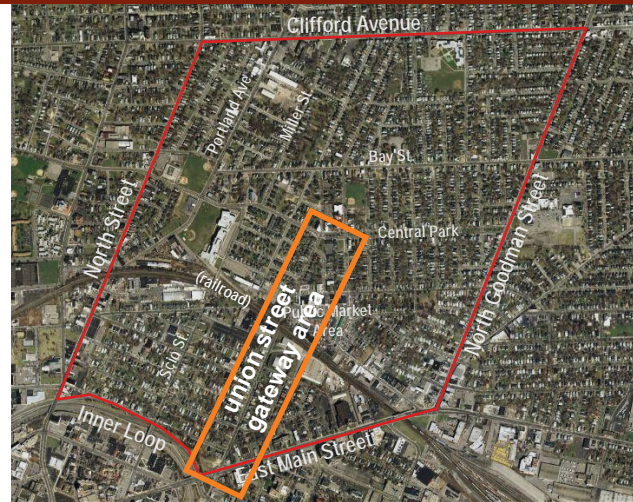
Marketview Heights neighborhood residents, members of local organizations, and city officials helped to develop the vision for the North Union Street corridor and will be integral in the implementation process. *Source: RRCDC*

INTRODUCTION

The North Union Street Corridor Mini-Charrette is the first of four phases identified for implementation over the next eight years as part of the Marketview Heights Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy. Completed in February 2006, the North Union Street Corridor was identified for immediate attention due to its high visibility, the presence of the Public Market, and the significant challenges it faces in addressing public safety, empty lots and buildings in need of rehabilitation. This area was chosen to begin implementing the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy due to the following reasons as identified in the document:

- *Builds on some of our neighborhood's key assets, including the Public Market and some of our most stable residential areas.*
- *Bridges to neighborhoods in need of high levels of investment.*
- *Includes a number of empty lots and unoccupied properties suitable for rehabilitation and creation of new homeownership opportunities.*
- *Is an area with significant safety issues, identified as the number one problem in the neighborhood.*
- *Is an area through which people from around the region travel, creating potential economic development benefits as well as an opportunity to show our pride.*

On Tuesday, October 2, 2007, nearly 40 community members met at the Dr. Freddie Thomas Learning Center with design professionals to participate in a community design mini-charrette to exchange ideas and begin developing a common vision for the future of the North Union Street Corridor. Those present included students, business owners, residents and other stakeholders from the Marketview Heights Neighborhood. The drawings and ideas generated at the mini-charrette were subsequently synthesized into tangible ideas for development.



Marketview Heights neighborhood and the North Union Street Corridor Mini-Charrette area. Source: Marketview Heights Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy

The Marketview Heights neighborhood is bounded to the north by Clifford Avenue and by the Inner Loop and East Main Street to the south; its eastern boundary is North Goodman Street, and its western boundary is North Street. The North Union Street Corridor, one of the primary entrances to the Rochester Public Market, extends from East Main Street to Central Park and is centrally located in the southern half of the neighborhood.

This report chronicles the processes before and after the mini-charrette. It illustrates the North Union Street Vision, which was developed by RRCDC based on the mini-charrette ideas and guided by the Marketview Heights Steering Committee. Each section of the report explores different aspects of the community or the processes involved in creating and beginning to implement the vision.

This report is intended to be a resource for members of the municipal government of the City of Rochester as well as any residents, business-owners and other individuals and organizations intending to develop or improve properties along the North Union Street Corridor.



NORTH UNION STREET

Marketview Heights, as it's name suggests, is home of the Rochester Public Market. Developed on the site of the Moulson Nursery, the Market had previously been established at several locations in Rochester including along the Genesee River at Main Street and later at the Liberty Pole at East Main Street, North Street, Franklin Street and East Avenue. Relocation of the Liberty Pole Market was argued for by wealthy entrepreneurs to abate what was a public nuisance in their view. Through a process involving intense public debate, paralyzing political factions, a Market Commission created by state legislation, a downtown fire, and a petition by farmers, wholesalers, and grocers, the present-day location of the Public Market was chosen in 1904 and opened for use in 1905.

Prior to the development of the Market, Irish immigrants first settled the area in the 19th century. Fleeing Ireland from the Potato Famine, these early residents created a predominantly working class neighborhood known as Cork. By the turn of the 20th century, a diverse array of socio-economic groups joined the Irish including Polish, Russian, and German immigrants. Between 1905 and 1910, between 5,000 and 10,000 Italian immigrants moved to the neighborhood immediately surrounding the Market.



View of Central Park looking west from Fifth Street (c. 1900).
Source: Monroe County Library System

The population of Rochester more than doubled between 1900 and 1920, leading to an expanded demand for housing. The rapid increase in population perhaps contributed to the activities of local real estate developers such as Hiram W. Sibley and Hobart F. Atkinson who developed the land south of the New York Central Railroad corridor between Union Street, Alexander Street and East Avenue as the Sibley & Atkinson Tract. In reaction to the over-development of tenement housing, developers such as Hiram W. Sibley and city officials sought to create "a city of homes" by constructing single-family neighborhoods.

The arrival of large immigrant populations concentrating in ethnic enclaves generated fears of cultural encroachment among the existing population. Efforts to "Americanize" the newcomers began through a social reform movement. Establishments by groups of women from prominent Rochester families, such as the Lewis Street Center, sought to instill American ways of cooking, raising children, and housekeeping in immigrant women. The new inhabitants adopted what worked more efficiently than their traditional ways but resisted efforts to change their cultural cooking habits, planting gardens to grow produce not locally available but vital to native dishes.



Food vendors at the Public Market showing the original market office building (c. 1911). Source: Monroe County Library System



The immigrant population relied on the Public Market for food and employment. However, by the 1920s, the question of the Market's utility was raised due to changes in technology such as advancement of refrigeration techniques and the proliferation of the automobile. On the one hand, the dependence of the surrounding neighborhood on the Market for food and jobs incited a passionate commitment and vested interest in its preservation. On the other hand, thousands of buyers and sellers were consistently plagued by the fact that the market did not have space to accommodate the new means of transportation being utilized by vendors. For many, the chaotic environment had become so intolerable that they turned to alternative markets in Syracuse and Buffalo to sell their wares.

The first time that all parties dedicated to the continued existence of the Public Market convened at the Chamber of Commerce to discuss its future was in 1924. All agreed that the Market needed to be expanded if it were to continue to thrive. The West Report, commissioned in 1926, undermined the chance for the development of a new public market by asserting that most of the problems the Market faced could be resolved by "more efficient administration and new, strictly enforced rules." The threat of the creation of a state-owned, regional market prompted the city to make improvements in 1931, the benefits of which soon proved to be out-moded.



Vendors and horse-drawn carts at the Public Market (c. 1911) looking from Railroad Street toward Union Street. Source: Monroe County Library System

Debate over the future of the Public Market continued throughout the Depression and well into the early 1960s. After the opening of the Genesee Valley Regional Market in Henrietta in 1954, a larger number of growers moved to this new location with the hopes of capturing the business of national chains. The anticipated rewards of moving to this facility, which possessed amenities the Public Market could not offer, did not materialize and many returned to the North Union Street location. Not until the Market Authority organized a tour of the Market for City Council and the County Board of Supervisors in February 1960, did a decision finally come to a head. Despite calls for the city to close the Public Market for the good of the community, the Council stood opposed. The Market would stay open as long as it was being used.

The decision to keep the Public Market open proved to be viable as economic forces in the late 1960s and early 1970s encouraged people to seek retail alternatives that restored a sense of community. Despite the ability of the Market to provide this, it and the surrounding neighborhood were once again being challenged, this time by the growing outflow to the suburbs and the competition of the supermarkets. Other forces influencing the neighborhood included a wave of emigrants consisting of displaced African Americans from the South who came looking for work and nearby neighborhoods being cleared for urban renewal. These new residents, along with Puerto Ricans,



View of North Union Street looking toward Central Park from Pennsylvania Avenue in 1906. Fremontes Market is on the left located at 309 North Union. Source: Monroe County Library System

attempted to rejuvenate a neighborhood being rapidly vacated as the Italian-American residents moved to the suburbs. Unfortunately, the exodus occurred at a great pace and the financial backing also followed them to the suburbs. The loss of manufacturing jobs was the most significant challenge in a neighborhood where the new residents were almost uniformly poor and lacked the skills to work in Rochester's high-tech industries.

In 1967, northeast neighborhoods were selected as a part of President Johnson's Model City program and his War on Poverty for job training and low-income housing development initiatives. Some improvements were made although there was a disconnect between what was desired by City Hall versus the neighborhood residents, who felt they deserved a bigger role in the decision making process. The city's focus on the Public Market in light of other areas of critical need became a divisive topic among neighborhood residents. Despite the loss of federal funding for the Model City program in 1973, the Market and surrounding neighborhood continued to be a focus for development through the federal Neighborhood Development Act of 1974.

In 1978, city planners decided to exclude the largely Hispanic portion of Marketview Heights from the area to be developed with federal monies, citing a lack of funding. The entire community around the Public Market united in opposition. For many the sight of an improved market amidst a sea of deteriorating houses was difficult to accept. It was also during this time that the area north of the railroad was designated as one of four sites for a future industrial park, causing funding available for housing rehabilitation and other improvements to be directed elsewhere. Efforts by local residents through neighborhood associations eventually lead to abandonment of this plan by the city and allowed organizations such as First Place, Housing Opportunities, Inc., and Habitat for Humanity to develop new and rehabilitated housing to the neighborhood.



Shoppers and vendors at the Public Market with the Bausch & Lomb "Navy Building" and Armory in the background (c. 1911).
Source: Monroe County Library System

For additional information about the Marketview Heights neighborhood, please see *The Hands That Feed Us: 100 Years at the Rochester Public Market* by Nancy Rosin.



Today the Marketview Heights neighborhood around the North Union Street Corridor continues to be identified with the Public Market and face challenges. Five characterizations ranging between excellent and very distressed based upon evaluation of data pertaining to “poverty, wealth, education, work status, home ownership, vacant properties and length of residence” capture levels of “stability and wellness” in the North Union Street Corridor of the Marketview Heights Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS). The document identifies physical elements such as the historic architecture, the Public Market, and the parks and open space within the neighborhood as assets and opportunities to build upon.

The North Union Street Corridor contains assets and opportunities, a number of which contributed to its historic development. The Public Market continues to draw thousands of visitors to the neighborhood every year. Many of the homes developed

in the Sibley & Atkinson subdivision between 1900 and 1920 remain today and are historically significant. The diverse history of the corridor is reflected in its present mix of uses including small neighborhood retailers and corner stores, single and multi-family homes, industry and civic space.

The neighborhood also faces a number of issues and challenges. Public safety was the number one issue identified by the NRS document and continues to be of top priority. Vacant and abandoned properties and poorly maintained public spaces (i.e. trash strewn lots, inadequate lighting, etc.) negatively contribute to public safety and the visual appearance of the corridor. There are also problems associated with gun violence and drugs.

The tide is beginning to turn in the corridor as it is recognized as a significant gateway to the Public Market. There is an increase in attention from the city and other stakeholders to address some of the



View looking north along Union Street toward Central Park from railroad trestle. The Rochester Public Market is on the right and the existing building on the left is proposed to be demolished to create more public market parking. *Source: RRCDC*



View of North Union Street looking toward Central Park from Pennsylvania Avenue in 2007. *Source: RRCDC*



Entrance to Rochester Public Market from North Union Street. *Source: RRCDC*

challenges facing the neighborhood while capitalizing upon its assets. Significant capital investments at the Public Market are being planned by the City and in the neighborhood through a targeted neighborhood investment strategy as a result of the City-wide Rochester Housing Market Study completed in 2007. Private investors are also developing new businesses and housing in the neighborhood. Residents are also working to develop new community garden space on existing vacant lots in the corridor.

In light of this renewed interest, the residents of the neighborhood have been adamant about facilitating revitalization without widespread displacement. Residents are pursuing a vision allowing them to share in the gains that occur and are committed to an “improvement, not displacement” approach to redevelopment. By leveraging the neighborhood’s major asset, the Public Market, the residents are seeking to spur improvements bring-

ing out the community’s potential in such a way that all can benefit.

The vision plan created as a result of the Market-view Heights Mini-Charrette will provide a cohesive approach to guide corridor development activities and to capitalize upon its assets and opportunities while addressing issues and challenges.



Residential properties lining North Union Street near Ontario Street. *Source: RRCDC*



One of the existing industries found along the North Union Street corridor. *Source: RRCDC*



Market on the corner of Weld and North Union streets. *Source: RRCDC*

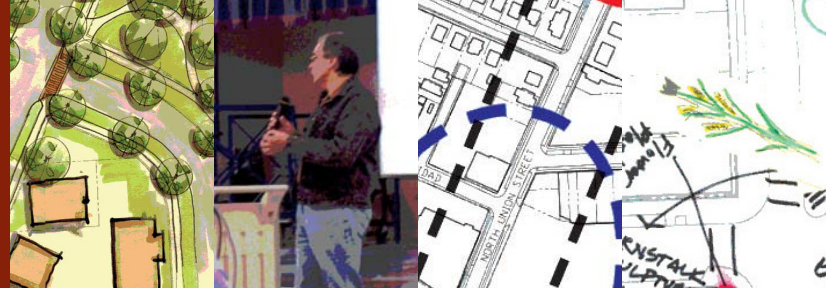


Marketview Heights residents meeting to discuss plans for converting a North Union Street vacant lot into a community garden. *Source: Pamela Reese Smith, ROI*



The site of a future restaurant at Trinidad and North Union streets. The building in the background occupies the site of future Public Market parking. *Source: RRCDC*

MINI-CHARRETTE



Planning for the Marketview Heights Mini-Charrette began at the suggestion of the Marketview Heights Collective Action Project (MVHCAP). Mini-charrette coordination was guided by the Marketview Heights Steering Committee, composed of representatives from a variety of stakeholder groups working in conjunction with RRCDC. They began meeting during the spring of 2007, where they reviewed a time line and planning schedule, established the official Mini-Charrette Steering Committee, and identified potential partners.

Steering Committee members represented a variety of Marketview Heights stakeholders, including Rural Opportunities, Inc., Housing Opportunities, Inc., Marketview Heights Association, the Rochester Public Library, Enterprise Community Partners, the City of Rochester, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, The Community Place of Greater Rochester, and neighborhood residents.

The Steering Committee met monthly with RRCDC to coordinate the mini-charrette. During meetings and walking tours of the area with RRCDC, much of the discussion and planning focused on the topics to be covered during the mini-charrette. The Steering Committee defined the mini-charrette focus areas and identified major design concerns based on an assessment of the existing assets and problem areas. The Steering Committee also helped to plan the structure of and coordinate the logistics for the event.

Planning and carrying out the Marketview Heights Mini-Charrette required many hours of intensive work on the part of the Steering Committee members. The time commitment from individuals was both a major challenge and a necessary ingredient in the mini-charrette process. Continued dedication through the post-charrette phase of the process now leaves the community poised to enter the implementation phase with confidence.

MINI-CHARRETTE STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Rural Opportunities, Inc.	City of Rochester - Public Market,
Housing Opportunities, Inc.	Community Development
Rochester Public Library	Neighbors Helping Neighbors
Enterprise Community Partners	The Community Place of Greater
Marketview Heights Association	Rochester



Neighborhood resident Rich Holowka presenting an overview of the Marketview Heights North Union Street Corridor project to the mini-charrette attendees. *Source: RRCDC*



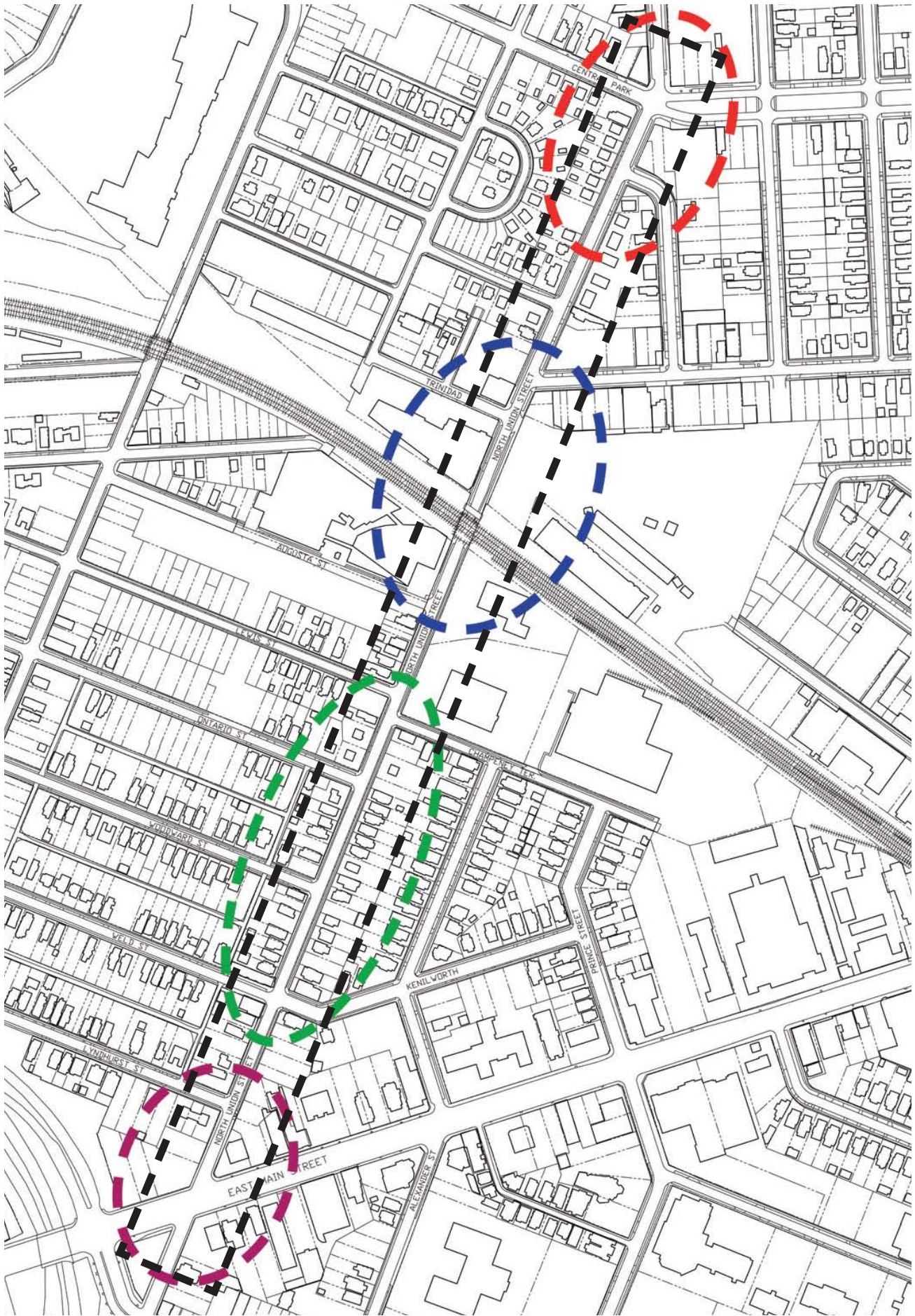
Residents and facilitators working on a vision for one of the nodes along the North Union Street corridor. *Source: RRCDC*



Neighborhood residents Brandy Bryant and Devon Young volunteered to present their group's vision for one of the focus areas. *Source: RRCDC*

The Marketview Heights Mini-Charrette took place on Tuesday, October 2, 2007, in the cafeteria of the Dr. Freddie Thomas Learning Center in the Marketview Heights neighborhood. The event included nearly 40 neighborhood residents, stakeholders, and over a half-dozen design professionals and facilitators. A significant age range was represented among the attendees; ideas and input were gathered from high-school students and senior neighborhood residents alike.

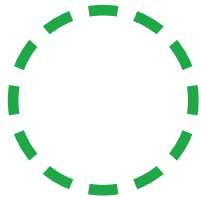
The event began at 5:30pm with refreshments and several opening speakers. Introductions were made by Pamela Reese Smith of Rural Opportunities, Inc. Remarks were made by Hanif Abdul-Wahid, Board President of the Marketview Heights Association; Susan Ottenweller, President of Housing Opportunities, Inc.; and Gladys Santiago, Vice President of City Council. Neighborhood resident Rich Holowka discussed the history of Marketview Heights North Union Street Corridor project. RRCDC board member Timothy Raymond concluded the introduction session with a presentation on principles of good urban design. Attendees were then broken into five different teams to explore five pre-determined focus areas. For an intense hour and a half, the teams, comprised of two design professionals and neighborhood stakeholders, explored their focus areas, taking note of both the positive and negative elements they observed, and drafting a vision for how they would like to see the node improved. Each of the focus areas were presented by residents to the larger group at the end of the evening.





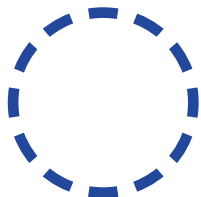
FOCUS AREA A

East Main Street Node - The focus area located at the southern entrance to the North Union Street corridor at its intersection with East Main Street.



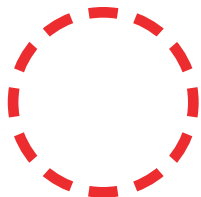
FOCUS AREA B

Kenilworth/Weld Node - The focus area addresses the intersection of Weld Street and Kenilworth Terrace.



FOCUS AREA C

Public Market Node - This focus area is located between Augusta Street and Pennsylvania Avenue and includes the entrance to the Public Market.



FOCUS AREA D

Central Park Node - The focus area is located at the north end of the Union Street at its intersection with Central Park.



FOCUS AREA E

Entire North Union Street Corridor - The entire North Union Street corridor from East Main Street to Central Park is incorporated into this focus area.

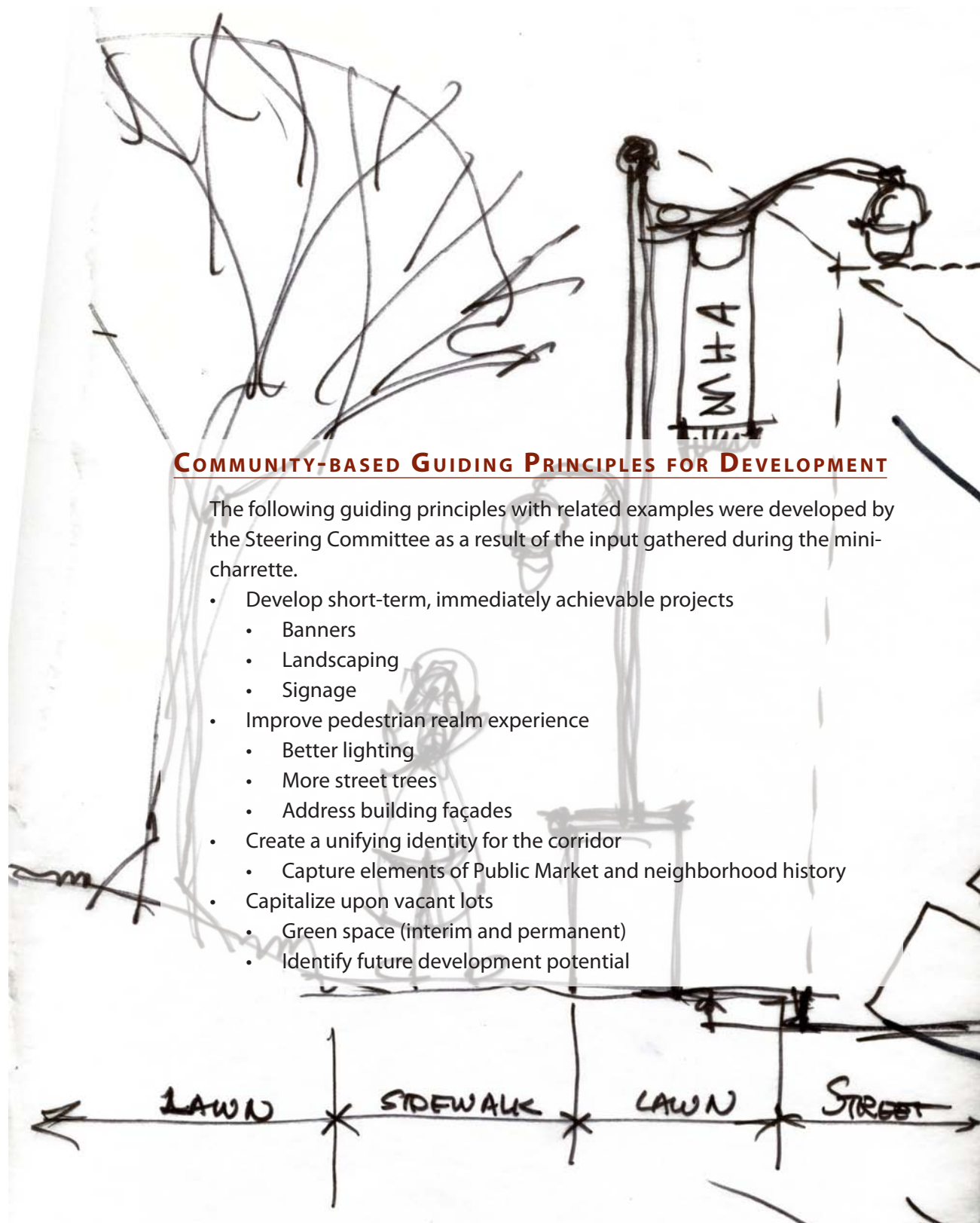
The mini-charrette resulted in a diversity of thoughtful and creative suggestions for improving the North Union Street corridor. While each focus group concentrated on a specific topic and developed unique approaches to their particular design challenges, similar themes also wove throughout many of the groups' results. In some cases the same specific idea arose independently in multiple groups.

The following pages present the drawings and concepts produced at the mini-charrette. They are organized by focus area. General themes and main

ideas that emerged in many focus groups were distilled by RRCDC and the Marketview Heights Steering Committee to become guidelines for development. Specific suggestions for development are also shown and described.

The renderings and text on the following pages were produced by participants and facilitators during the 2007 mini-charrette. Aside from reducing or enlarging their scale, the images are unchanged from their genesis during the event. The written text is verbatim.





COMMUNITY-BASED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT

The following guiding principles with related examples were developed by the Steering Committee as a result of the input gathered during the mini-charrette.

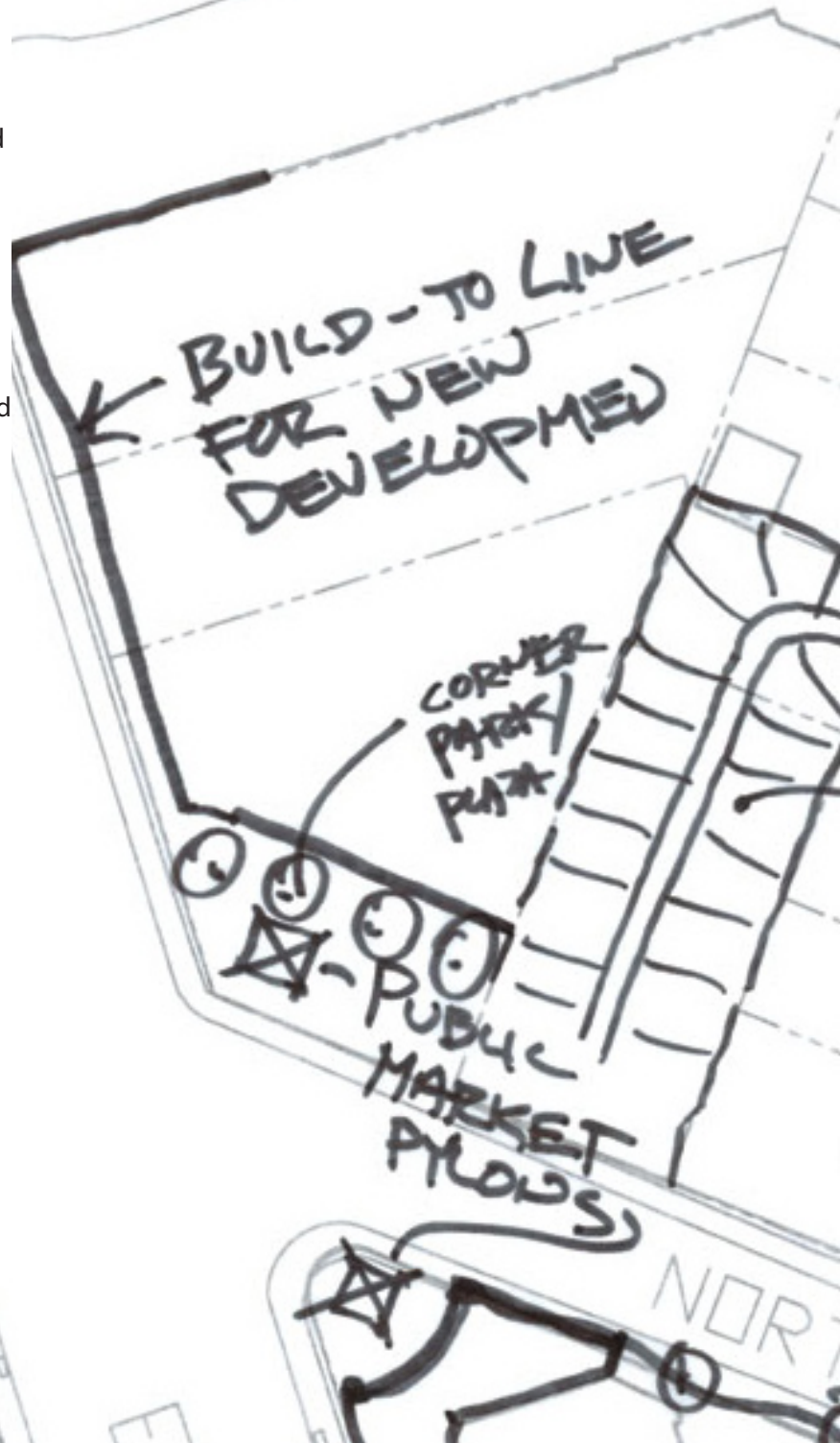
- Develop short-term, immediately achievable projects
 - Banners
 - Landscaping
 - Signage
- Improve pedestrian realm experience
 - Better lighting
 - More street trees
 - Address building façades
- Create a unifying identity for the corridor
 - Capture elements of Public Market and neighborhood history
- Capitalize upon vacant lots
 - Green space (interim and permanent)
 - Identify future development potential

FOCUS AREA A: EAST MAIN STREET NODE

Description: The focus area located at the southern entrance to the North Union Street corridor at its intersection with East Main Street.

Community Suggestions from the Charrette:

- Sidewalks must pass inspection “trip ledge”
 - uneven edges
- Photo 1 (Building on northwest corner of Central Park and North Union Street) – tan brick, sandblasting, add shine to coat brick and preserve exterior
- Photo 5 (Building on northwest corner of Trinidad and North Union Streets) – check basement foundation, strong enough? Cracks?
- Photo 9 and 10 (Railroad trestle) – columns should be checked for cracks, deterioration
 - Check and repair concrete wall, top and bond mortar
- Photo 12 (Retaining wall for railroad bridge underpass) – concrete retaining wall repair needed, top and bond mortar
- Public garden
- Coffee shop/ice cream
- Home sidewalk/allow street trees
- Use wall/fence to tell history of market, etc.
- Market study of the Market





GROUP 5

FOCUS AREA B: KENILWORTH/WELD NODE

Description: The focus area addresses the intersection of Weld Street and Kenilworth Terrace.

Community Suggestions from the Charrette:

Issues:

- Community involvement
- Drug activity
- Grocery store
- Vacant houses
- Vacant lots
- Poor pavement quality
- Bare, bleak
- Litter
- Speed
- Adequate safe parking
- Safety

Theme: Public Market

- Establish NET PAC-TAC, lighting
- Nice Garbage Cans
- Curb extension
- Lot behind grocery store
- Intersection treatments
 - Public market (or other) logo in pavement

Design Guidelines:

- Lighting – ‘human scale’
- Street trees
- Planters
- Color schemes
- Fences
- Public market banners
- Gateway treatment



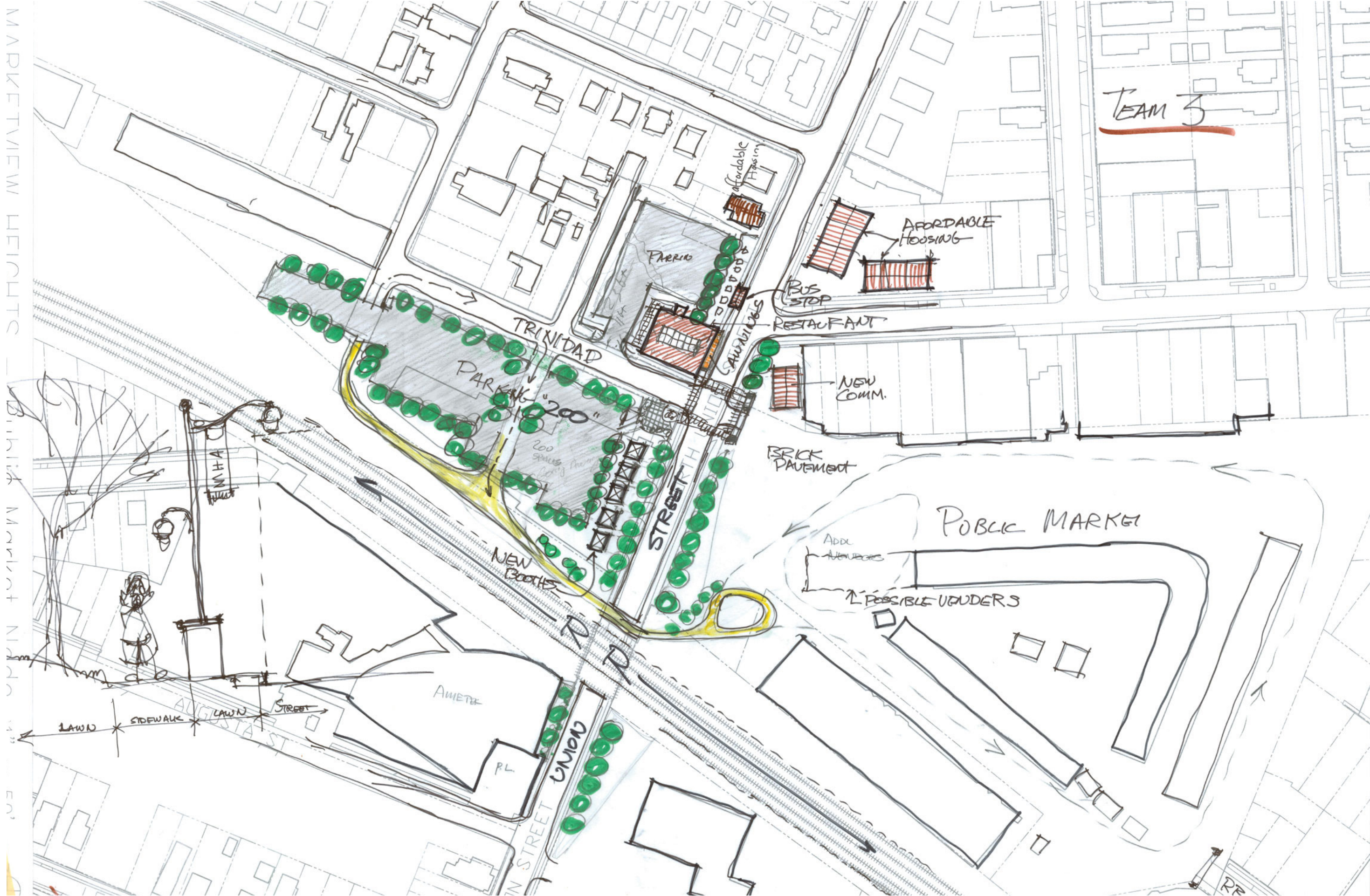
FOCUS AREA C: PUBLIC MARKET NODE

Description: This focus area is located between Augusta Street and Pennsylvania Avenue and includes the entrance to the Public Market.

Community Suggestions from the Charrette:

- Understanding Beautification
 - Drainage, lighting, painting/murals, pedestrian railing, litter/garbage cans
- Street Trees / Yards
- Re-Use of 2nd Bridge
 - Plantings -> "trolley" from new parking lot to market
- Better Booths (Market)
 - Replace parking lots on Pennsylvania/Union and union by gate
 - New booths in new parking lot
- New Restaurant
- Parking Lot Landscaping
- Open New Gate Southside Market
- Ametek Façade
- Banners
- New Streetlighting Scheme
- Flower Beds / Color
 - Grass/Landscape Slopes – colored stones, mural, art
- Street Furniture
 - Trash receptors, benches, bus shelters
- Affordable housing
- Brick Crossings





GROUP
#2



FOCUS AREA D: CENTRAL PARK NODE

Description: The focus area is located at the north end of the Union Street at its intersection with Central Park.

Community Suggestions from the Charrette:

Features / Impressions:

- New housing
- Vacant lot
- Art/greenspace
- Wading pool? Water feature seen in other communities
- Community garden (veggies)
- Gateway feature
- Cornstalk (market symbol)
 - Substantial to discourage vandalism
- Logo on banners/flags
- Banners/flags across street

Crossing:

- Crosswalks different texture (cobble, etc.)

- Need kiosks
- Celebrate diversity of neighborhood and market
- Market 5/7 days a week would increase business activity/investment
- Possible median on west side of intersection

Greening:

- Street trees
- Niagara street green area
- Water feature (wading?)
- Brick low wall w/market logo, welcome etc. (could be done on other corners)
- Need pathways (otherwise people will make their own)

Building Facades:

- Open up lower levels
- Coffee shop
- Fix up facades: neighborhood might look into working w/city to get funding to beautify/up-grade
- Too many signs/boards
- Pennsylvania/First street buildings, ethnic groceries

Security:

- Cameras on corners? City "eye in sky"
- Lighting
- Open up building first floors so people can see street activity
- Events/concerts storefront
- Too many corners stores and churches
- City may have funding for lighting/security systems
- Attractive iron gratings over windows



FOCUS AREA E: NORTH UNION STREET CORRIDOR

Description: The entire North Union Street corridor from East Main Street to Central Park is incorporated into this focus area.

Community Suggestions from the Charrette:

Neighbor Identity:

- Identifiable Signage
- Locally Owned Businesses
- Established Good Neighborhood
- Design Principles

Façade Grant Program:

- Public Safety
- Street Cameras
- Street Lights

Establishing Good Community

How To Generate 24/7 Community:

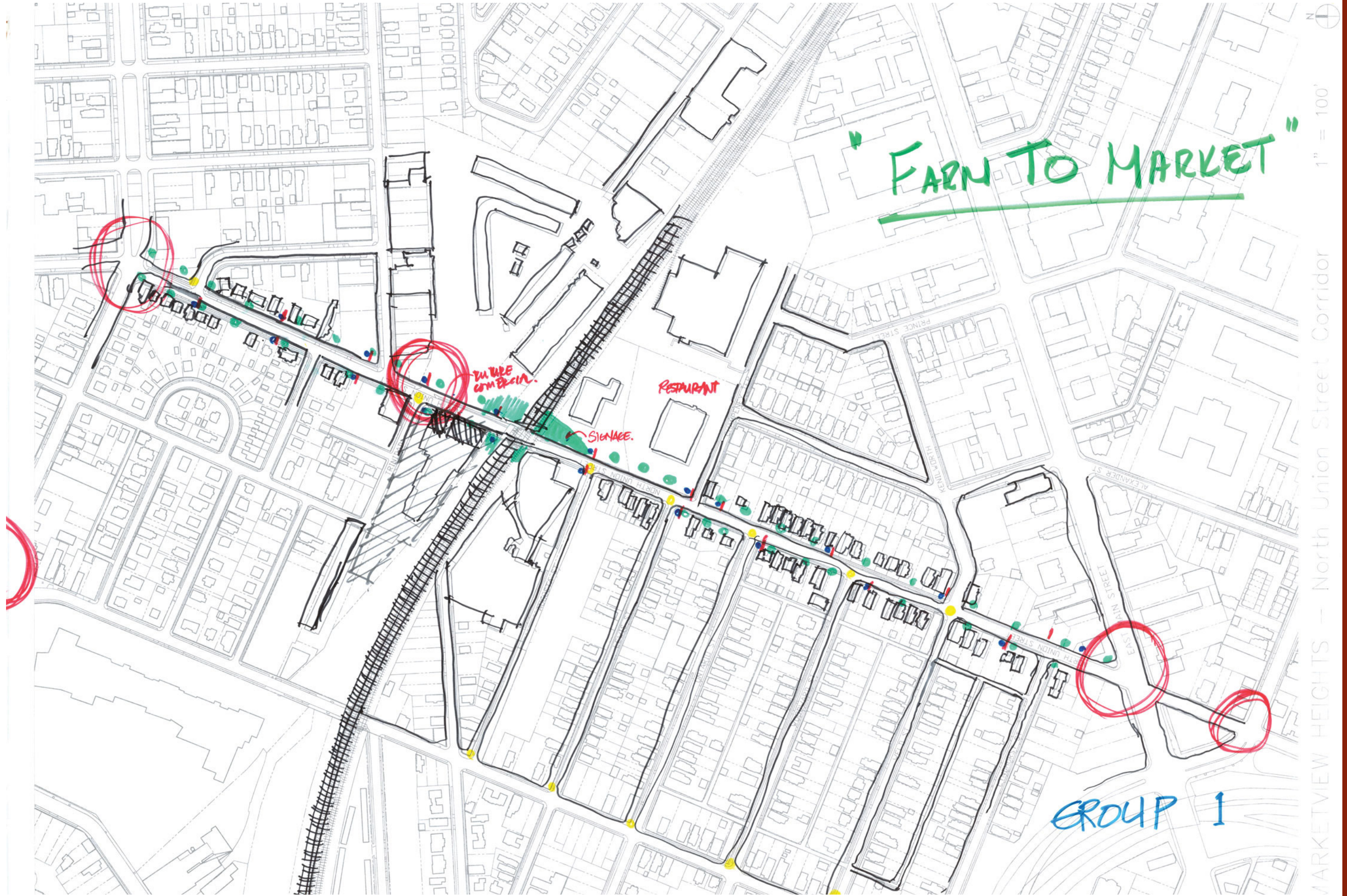
- Street Lights
- Street Parking – New curb cuts / Painted to permanent
- Growth From Public Market
- Establish Design Principles
- Ornate Bridge Underpass
- Target Union and Weld
 - Public safety concern
- Key Gateways along Union, related to public market

Street Walks:

- “Farm to Market” theme
- Street name – symbolic change
- Gateway Design – Using Public Market building style throughout neighborhood
- Especially at Weld and Union

Using Public Space to Generate Improved Public Safety





VISION PLAN

After the mini-charrette, the ideas raised were translated into design concepts and shown on maps. The result of this process is a vision plan for the North Union Street Corridor. During this first phase of post charrette work for the North Union Street Corridor Vision, RRCDC, in consultation with the Marketview Heights Steering Committee, refined and built upon the ideas raised at the mini-charrette and began to formulate strategies for implementation.

This vision plan is important for a variety of reasons. It is based on ideas generated at the mini-charrette and serves as a record of those ideas and recommendations. Working in this format ensures continuity and coordination, effectively tying together what is done in one area of the community with that in another in an overall strategy. It allows the community a resource it can employ when explaining strategies, seeking funding and encouraging investors to support development ideas. A documented vision is valuable for the community to refer to when issues develop regarding planning and zoning. It serves as a planning tool and a map for short and long-term project development and implementation.

Although the term “plan” is used to describe aspects of the vision, it should be recognized this is not a static document. It will take additional planning and implementation over the course of ensuing years to achieve the vision generated here. During this time, conditions will change and new opportunities not foreseen may arise. This document allows the flexibility to respond to these changes for the benefit of the corridor as a whole.

The North Union Street Corridor Vision Plan is comprised of the final plans, renderings and written descriptions provided in the following section of this report. The plans presented are as follows:

- Mini-Charrette Area Plan;
- Plan A—East Main Street Node;
- Plan B—Kenilworth/Weld Node;
- Plan C—Public Market Node; and
- Plan D—Central Park Node.

The Mini-Charrette Area Plan depicts the overall North Union Street Corridor and indicates the node locations. Each node, labeled A through D, presents the proposed improvements for that segment of the corridor. The proposed improvements are color-coded and a legend is provided to indicate the type of development or enhancement each color represents. In addition, specific elements are labeled on the drawings to indicate the type of improvement envisioned.

A written summary outlines the major proposed improvements.

Some improvements envisioned are common to the entire corridor and relate to concepts identified in the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy and/or developed as a result of the mini-charrette. These include:

- The creation of dedicated on-street parking distinguished by bump-outs along the west side of the street;
- Additional sources of lighting, which combine street and pedestrian lights on one pole. These light poles would also accommodate new signs or banners celebrating the corridor's connection to the Public Market with a "Farm to Market" theme; and
- More street trees, the character of which would not preclude visual safety or negatively impact existing or proposed lighting.



An example of an immediately achievable beautification project – planters. *Source: RRCDC*



An example of an immediately achievable beautification project – gateway banners. *Source: RRCDC*



An example of an immediately achievable beautification project – window boxes. *Source: RRCDC*



The development and installation of more contemporary banners along North Union Street is one idea to help to beautify the corridor. *Source: Dorothy Paige, ROI*

DEVELOP SHORT-TERM, IMMEDIATELY ACHIEVABLE PROJECTS

One of the guiding principles generated by the Marketview Heights Steering Committee as a result of the mini-charrette was to develop short-term, immediately achievable projects. These projects include the design and installation of banners, landscaping and signage to celebrate the neighborhood. While these elements can be installed in phases at specific intersections or nodes, it is felt that their installation throughout the entire corridor would give a strong unifying approach.



An example of proposed pedestrian realm improvements – bump outs. *Source: RRCDC*

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN REALM EXPERIENCE

Improving the pedestrian realm experience is an important element of the vision for the corridor. As a major gateway for the neighborhood, North Union Street provides the first impression for visitors and residents. Planting more street trees, encouraging façade improvements to buildings and investing in better lighting can help to create a better experience along the corridor. The residents at the mini-charrette and members of the Steering Committee repeatedly emphasized the importance of improved lighting to increase public safety throughout the corridor. The street trees will provide an element of greenery throughout the corridor and provide shade for pedestrians but should not visually obstruct views of the street or create an unsafe pedestrian environment. Building facades of retail establishments should feature transparent openings to allow passersby the ability to see in and allow patrons and owners alike to be able to view the street scene. Controlling the speed of cars through the corridor is also desirable to create a safer pedestrian experience. Traffic calming elements include the installation of bump-outs and speed tables.



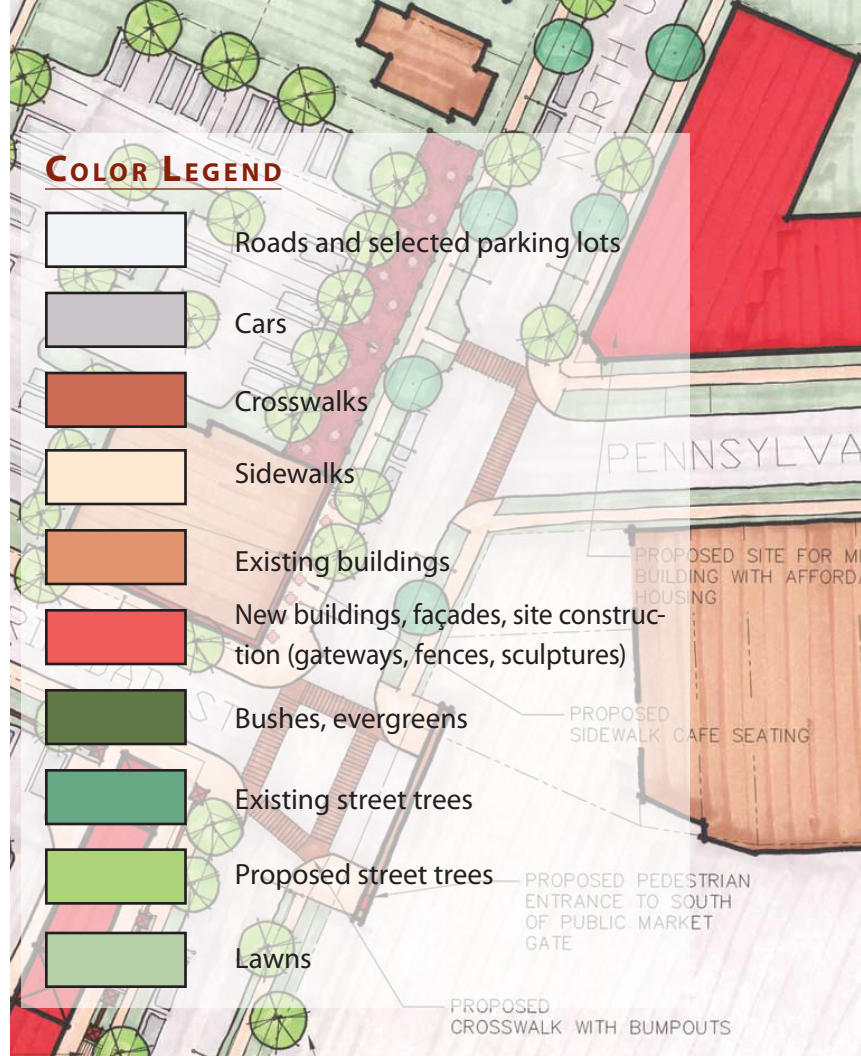
An example of proposed pedestrian realm improvements – speed tables. *Source: Fairfax County, VA*

CREATE UNIFYING IDENTITY TO THE CORRIDOR

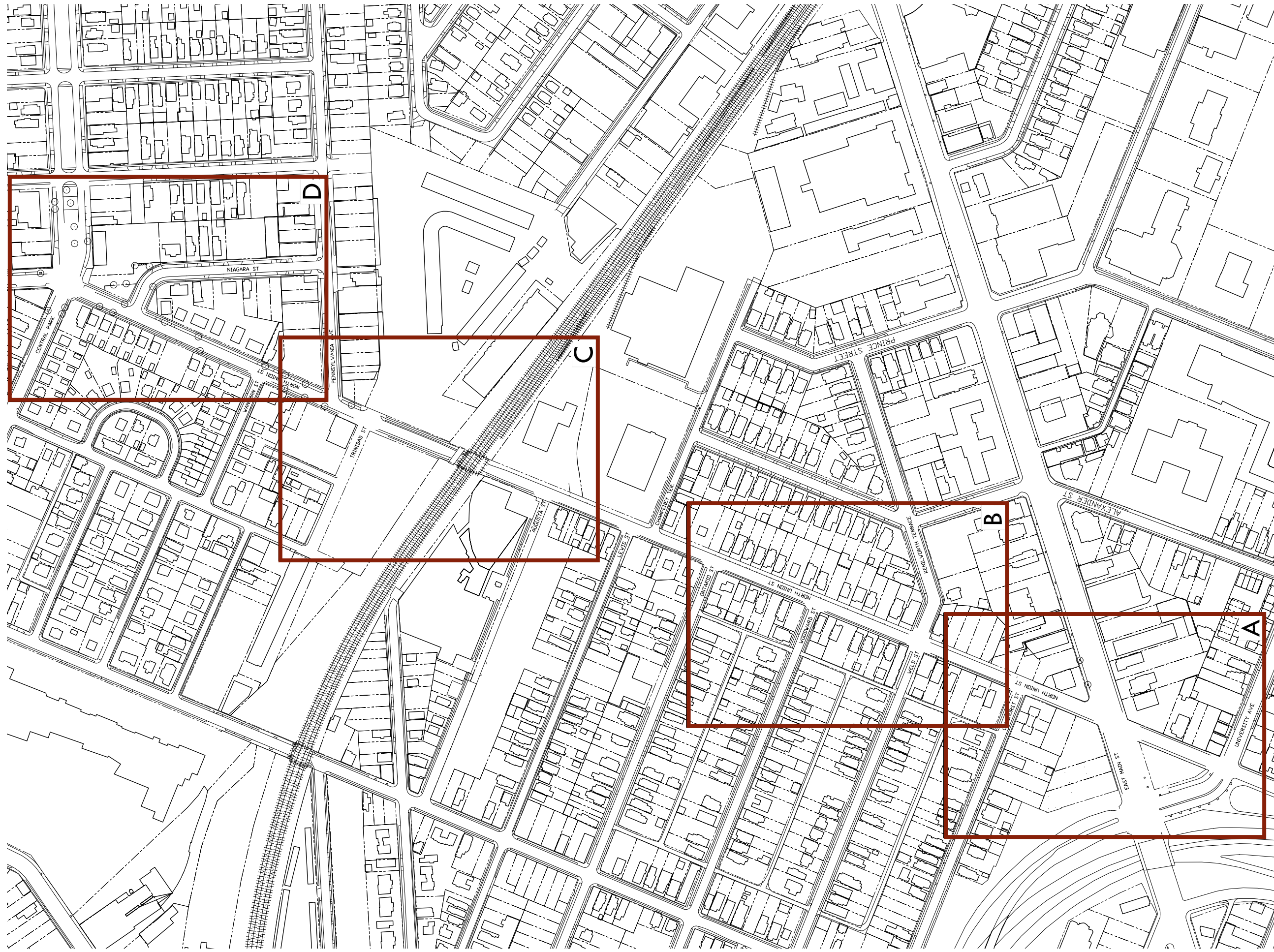
The residents and Steering Committee would like the corridor to have a unified identity that expresses its connection to the Public Market and the neighborhood's history. The "Farm to Market" theme emerged from the mini-charrette as a way to capture the importance of the Public Market and the neighborhood as a gateway for goods to the city from the surrounding agricultural areas. The development of gateway elements, in partnership with local artists and residents, at either end of the corridor would celebrate this connection. Incorporating elements of the neighborhood's history in these gateways and in other locations such as on retaining walls with murals gracing their surfaces near the Public Market. The railroad trestle is also a significant landmark which can be used to celebrate the neighborhood's past while looking toward the future.

CAPITALIZE UPON VACANT LOTS

There are a number of vacant lots dispersed along North Union Street as well as abandoned homes in need of repair or demolition. The community desires to treat these as assets to be developed for the positive benefit of the neighborhood, reversing their current negative influence. Some of these vacant lots are planned to be developed as community garden spaces. At certain locations, this may be a temporary, short-term reuse option. There are other sites which the community may wish to permanently designate as green space. Vacant houses should be evaluated for their potential rehabilitation into workforce housing. The community should work with the city, private developers, and other stakeholders to determine the reuse options that meet the needs of neighborhood while balancing economic viability.



Proposed site for future community garden along North Union Street. Source: RRCDC



PLAN A- EAST MAIN STREET NODE



Vacant lot at the intersection of East Main and North Union streets. *Source: RRCD*

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The East Main Street Node of North Union Street is the primary gateway to the corridor from the south as well as the eastern gateway to downtown. There are a number of commercial buildings along East Main Street, some of which are sensitive to their urban context and others which are not. The north-west corner of the Main and Union street intersection is a vacant lot while the southwest corner is occupied by a remaining portion of the historic Anderson Park.



OVERVIEW OF VISION FEATURES IN PLAN A

CREATE A GATEWAY ELEMENT

The gateway nature of this node will be captured by installing gateway elements to draw attention to the corridor and its relationship to the Public Market. Initially, these elements may take the form of banners and/or landscaping. Eventually, sculptural elements created by local artists working with neighborhood residents will highlight the “Farm to Market” theme of the corridor.

IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN REALM

The pedestrian realm at this node will be improved by installing new light poles providing street and pedestrian lighting equipped to display banners, and screening the existing parking area associated with the adjacent commercial uses with a new decorative fence. A long-range goal is plant more street trees in an expanded tree lawn created by replacing the existing sidewalk with one situated at the back of the right of way.

CAPITALIZE UPON VACANT LOTS

The vacant lots existing at this node present the opportunities for the development of new buildings and the creation of community green spaces. The vacant lot at the corner of East Main Street and North Union should be developed sensitive to the site’s context as a major gateway to the neighborhood and downtown. Parking would be located behind the building and utilize green building techniques such as rain gardens. Three of the other vacant lots are proposed for infill housing. To capture the neighborhood’s connection to the Public Market, two of the vacant lots are proposed as sites for community gardens.



An example of a sculptural gateway element from the ARTWalk neighborhood that could be created by local artisans and neighborhood residents. *Source: RRCDC*



Example of a parking lot rain garden storm water management in Portland, OR. *Source: Jonathan Logan*



PLAN A - EAST MAIN STREET NODE

PLAN B—KENILWORTH/WELD NODE



Corner store located at the intersection of Kenilworth Terrace, Weld Street and North Union Street. *Source: RRCD*

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Kenilworth/Weld Node of the North Union Street Corridor is representative of the historic nature of the neighborhood as well as many of the contemporary challenges it faces. A small corner store exists and is reflective of the former “urban village” nature of the neighborhood. A mix of single-family, multi-family, owner-occupied and rental residences surround the intersection. Additionally, there are a number of vacant lots as well as abandoned homes scattered throughout the node. The intersection of Kenilworth Terrace, Weld, and North Union streets is also a location with drug and other public safety challenges.



OVERVIEW OF VISION FEATURES IN PLAN B

ADDRESS VACANT LOTS

It is the desire of the community to have the existing vacant lots in this node landscaped as either interim or permanent green spaces. These activities would involve installing more attractive fencing or engaging local artists to help residents paint or otherwise address the existing city-installed wooden posts in a more aesthetically pleasing manner. The installation and maintenance of landscaping should also engage residents, especially youth.



Vacant lot greening in Philadelphia. Source: Philadelphia Green

IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN REALM

To address the public safety issues it is desired to have more lighting installed at the intersection and along the corridor. These poles would be equipped with both street and pedestrian appropriate light fixtures and be able to display banners. The installation of bump-outs at intersections would create more visible pedestrian crossing zones while also better distinguishing appropriate areas for on-street parallel parking. The installation of a “Farm to Market” emblem at the intersection would help to extend the connection of the neighborhood to the Public Market through the corridor. A long-term goal would be to create a larger tree lawn for street trees by installing a new sidewalk situated at the rear of the public right of way along the east side of the street.



Artist rendering of new street trees, signage and lighting with banners along North Union Street. Source: RRCDC



PLAN B - KENILWORTH/WELD NODE

PLAN C—PUBLIC MARKET NODE



Source: Live Search Maps



Existing Marketview Heights community mural located at the railroad trestle along North Union Street. *Source: RRCDC*

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Public Market Node contains largely commercial and industrial uses. New and existing businesses are found along North Union Street. The railroad trestle underpass presents opportunities and challenges. The retaining walls necessary to create the underpass offer surfaces for local artisans and residents to install murals but the conditions of these structures needs to be evaluated and possibly improved. Major investments on the part of the city will lead to additional parking and improved pedestrian circulation at the Trinidad Street intersection.

OVERVIEW OF VISION FEATURES IN PLAN C

IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN REALM

The pedestrian realm in the Public Market node is envisioned to be improved through the installation of better lighting, more street trees and landscaping, crosswalks, and murals along the existing retaining walls. The underpass should have new lighting installed. The city should continue pursuing access to the second railroad trestle to allow the installation of a pedestrian and shuttle access to the Public Market from the new parking area. Bumpouts are envisioned for the west side of the street to provide better visibility of pedestrians at crosswalks. It is desired that the steeply sloped areas adjacent to the railroad underpass be landscaped and/or reshaped with new retaining walls and murals.

INFILL VACANT LOTS

There are a number of vacant lots which are identified to be reused through new infill development or redeveloped as new parking areas. The larger of these lots will provide new parking and overflow vending space for the Public Market while another will be used by a new restaurant for parking and outdoor seating. The empty lot at the corner of North Union Street and Pennsylvania Avenue is envisioned to be a redeveloped as a mixed use building incorporating affordable housing.

ADOPT GREEN TECHNOLOGIES

It is the desire of the neighborhood to be a greener place in its physical redevelopment. Therefore, green technologies such as permeable paving, rain gardens, and an alternative fuel (biodiesel, electric, etc.) shuttle for the Public Market parking area are proposed.



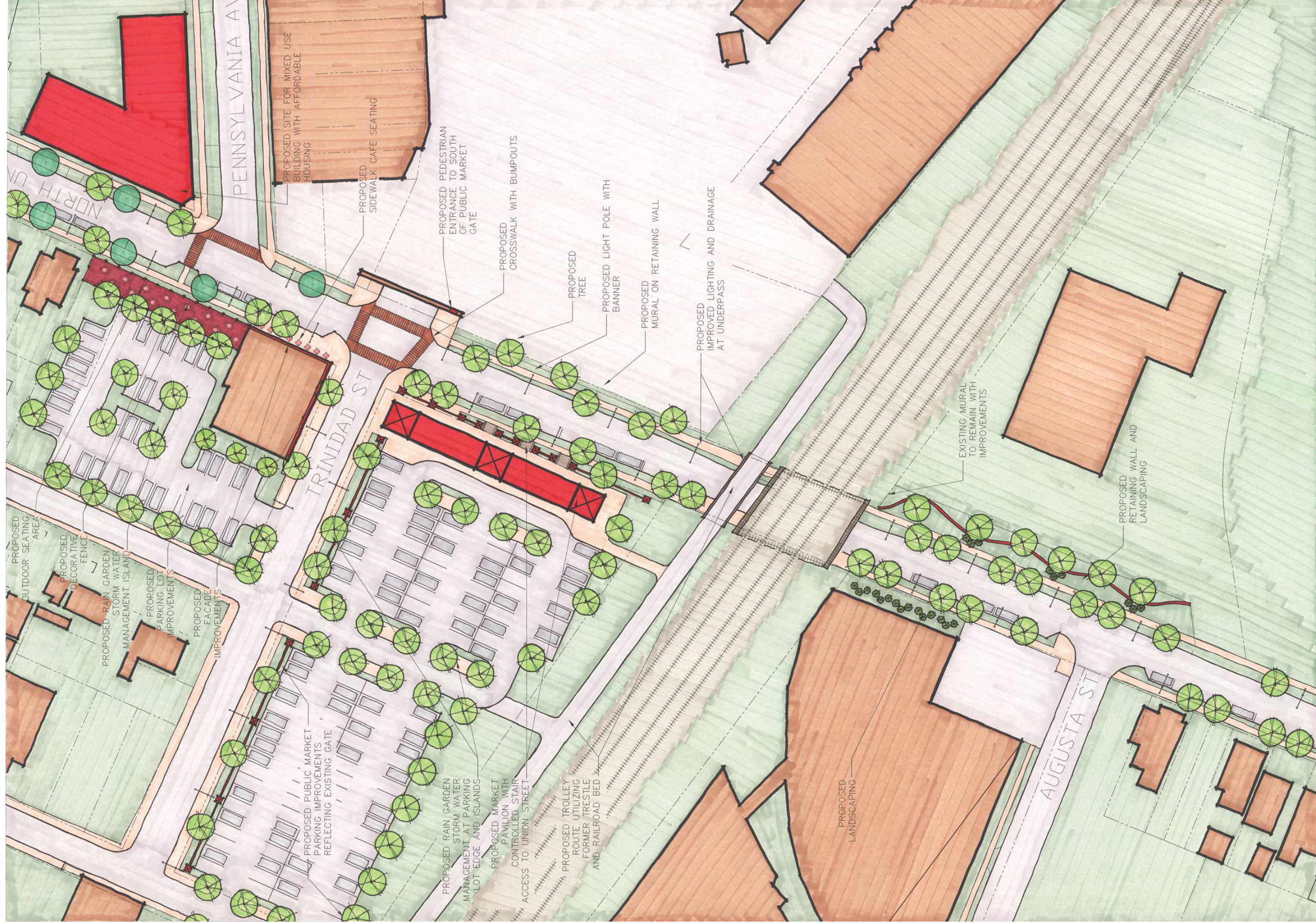
The Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls, MA, an example for developing the trestle linking the Public Market to the new parking area. Source: Flickr, erjkprunczyk



The installation of the "WallTogether" mural in by the Armory Art Center in West Palm Beach, FL. Source: Elle Schorr Photography



Example of sidewalk dining seating. Source: RRCDC



PLAN D—CENTRAL PARK NODE



An area landscaped by community residents at the corner of North Union and Niagara streets. *Source: RRCDC*

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Central Park Node is the northern gateway into the North Union Street Corridor. The reconfiguration of the intersection of Niagara and North Union streets created an area of greenspace at the southeastern corner. The southwestern corner is vacant and used as a parking lot. Existing commercial buildings occupy the two remaining corners and are in need of facade improvements. There are more generous tree lawns and these have been utilized to install street trees. The node is not very well lit, leading to public safety issues. The existing median along Central Park begins here and continues east, providing a significant area for landscaping. Neighborhood residents have also landscaped a small corner parcel at Union and Niagara. New infill housing was developed along the western side of North Union Street in this node.



OVERVIEW OF VISION FEATURES IN PLAN D

CREATE A GATEWAY

As the northern gateway to the corridor, the community desires to capture the “Farm to Market” theme by installing a sculpture and decorative fencing at the corner. These elements should be developed in partnership with local artists and community residents.

IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN REALM

There are issues of public safety to be addressed through a number of physical improvements including new lighting, speed tables, new crosswalks and bumpouts. The speed tables are located so as to discourage drivers from speeding to beat the light. The installation of a narrow landscaped median on the west side of the Central Park and North Union Street intersection is intended to provide a refuge for pedestrians crossing the street in the event that the light changes. Planters, street trees, and facade improvements are also intended to improve the pedestrian realm.

CAPITALIZE UPON VACANT LOTS

This node also contains a number of vacant and underutilized lots that are opportunities to improve the corridor. One double lot has been a site around which the neighborhood has united to create a community garden. The large green space created from the reconfiguration of Niagara Street is also desired to be a location for community gardens with plots available for residents to grow their own vegetables. It is envisioned this space would also contain a water spray park and a performance space for neighborhood children. The southwestern corner of Central Park and North Union Street as well as First Street are locations where new infill buildings are desired.



Example of facade improvements. Source: RRCDC



Neighborhood residents and students from Edison Tech begin work on the North Union Street Life Garden. Source: Pamela Reese Smith, ROI



Example of context sensitive infill buildings. Source: RRCDC



PLAN D - CENTRAL PARK NODE

RRCDC will assist the Marketview Height Steering Committee as it embarks upon the development of this action plan. It will help to:

- Identify and prioritize action items into goals and objectives;
- Assist with the development of partnerships with other organizations adept at creating graphic designs capturing the “Farm to Market” theme for the corridor;
- Establish partnerships between local artisans and community residents to develop sculptural gateway elements;
- Continue to engage the City of Rochester and other neighborhood stakeholders in their planning efforts related to the targeted neighborhood investment strategies:
 - To ensure the vision of the community is given careful consideration as future development is pursued;
 - Engage neighborhood residents in developing plans and strategies for greening vacant lots;
 - Work with city agencies, the local NET office, business organizations and residents to address public safety issues emanating from activities occurring on the street and within local establishments.

These activities would be applicable not only to the North Union Street Corridor but to the larger neighborhood. Key items they should seek to address are:

- Problem properties;
- Community development issues; and
- Developing collaborations.

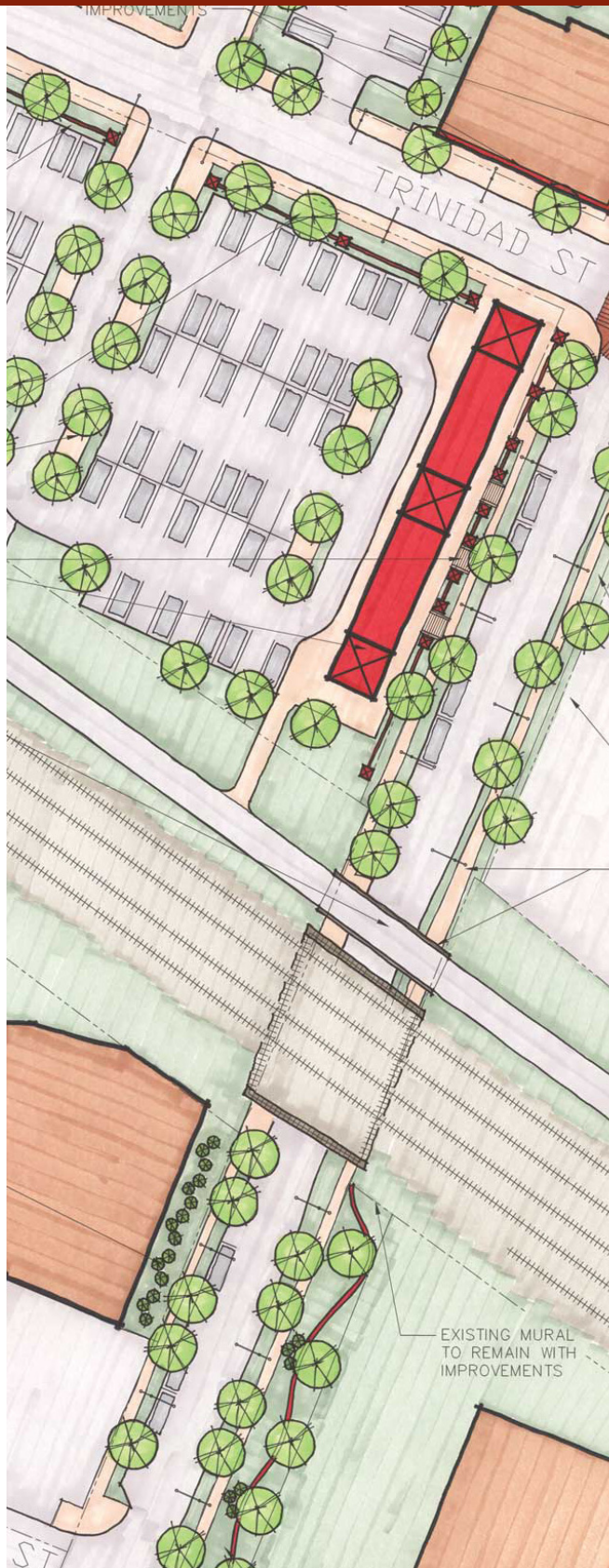


Neighborhood residents and Edison Tech students completing a cleanup of the North Union Street Life Garden. Source: Pamela Reese Smith, ROI



Preparation of one of the planting beds at the North Union Street Life Garden. Source: Pamela Reese Smith, ROI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS



Planning, carrying out, and following up the Marketview Heights Mini-Charrette have been parts of a process to help community members take steps towards setting and achieving goals for their neighborhood. The vision presented in this report will provide the residents of the North Union Street Corridor and the Marketview Heights neighborhood with a record of the ideas community members developed during the visioning process. The report is a guide to follow as the community proceeds with revitalization efforts. The efforts put forth to create this vision must be followed with actions during the implementation phase. The upcoming steps will be exciting but challenging.

The visioning process and mini-charrette can serve as a model for future planning projects in the Marketview Heights neighborhood and surrounding communities seeking to revitalize or plan for their future. Communities of many types can follow this basic model of engaging citizens, forging new community relationships, exploring the physical and social aspects of their area, and working together to develop consensus. Communities that engage in these processes will often discover that simply embarking on this journey will lead to the emergence of many unexpected yet welcome long-term effects.



Community residents discuss with city officials their vision for the Marketview Heights neighborhood and the North Union Street corridor. Source: RRCDC

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CHARRETTE FACILITATORS

Marketview Heights North Union Corridor Steering Committee

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Roberto Burgos

Carolyn Daniels

Peter Faris

Jim Farr

Theo Finn

Barbara Fox

Evan T. Green

Hank Herrera

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Melanie Lew

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John Wiltse

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Tim Raymond

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ABOUT RRCDC

The mission of the non-profit Rochester Regional Community Design Center (RRCDC) is to act as a multifaceted resource center to assist municipalities and citizens of the Greater Rochester Region to define, understand, promote and implement concepts of design excellence and sustainability for the public realm and built environment.

One of our most effective means of civic engagement is the community design charrette, an intensive, participatory planning process that brings together a variety of community stakeholders to observe and share ideas about their community. Together they produce tangible steps toward achieving neighborhood consensus for a community vision. As facilitator, we work with a steering committee of neighborhood representatives to plan the charrette, provide design professionals at the event to help translate citizens' ideas into physical drawings, and follow through with those initial ideas to create a final set of plans and recommendations for the community.

Since we began our work as the AIA Rochester Urban Design Committee (UDC) in 1998, the group has facilitated over twenty community design charrettes, including the Center City Charrette that resulted in a community-based vision for Rochester's downtown and was a starting point for the 2007 Downtown Charrette. Other design charrettes facilitated by the RRCDC include the University Avenue Charrette that resulted in construction of the award-winning ARTWalk project. In 2004, we officially incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and continue to serve our region.



